

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 2310

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS JO US SA UR

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE

REF: (A) STATE 110314, (B) JIDDA 3076, (C) AMMAN 2301

1. VERY MUCH APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL A. APPARENT THAT INSTRUCTIONS

CROSSED REFTELS (B) AND (C) AND THAT LATTER TWO CABLES RAISE SOME ISSUES WHICH I BELIEVE I SHOULD EXPLORE WITH YOU BEFORE DELIVERING INSTRUCTIONS.

2. PRIMARY APPROACH HERE HAS BEEN TO WORK WITH KING ON AN EFFORT TO REASSURE HIM THAT WE WERE GOING AT THE QUESTION OF FUNDING A FULL SYSTEM IN PHASES. WHILE CURENT EFFORT HAS BEEN OF NECESSITY DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO SAUDI PART OF THE ARRANGEMENT, I BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO BE EQUALLY GENERAL (OR SPECIFIC) WITH KING ON THE PHASE TWO QUESTION AS WITH PHASE ONE. THIS MEANS THAT IF AND WHEN SAUDI OFFER WORKED OUT BY AMBASSADOR PORTER TO INCREASE FUNDING TO 500 MILLION LEVEL IS PRESENTED HERE IT CAN BE DONE IN LIGHT OF THE FULL PACKAGE. KING HAS NOT BEEN INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN DETAILS OF PACKAGE AND SO GENERALITIES CAN HELP TOGETHER WITH CITATIONS OF SPECIFIC ITEMS

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FOR EXAMPLE WHICH COULD BE INCLUDED IN EACH PHASE.

3. THIS REFTEL (A) PARA 7 TAKES ON SOME IMPORTANCE IN AND OF ITSELF AND ALSO REGARDING WAY I APPROACH PHASE I, IE I WOULD LIKE TO AVOID CONCEPT THAT WE HAVE "CUT" PACKAGE (PARA 2) OF NON ESSENTIAL ITEMS THIS IS IN PART TURE BECAUSE PHASING OF FUNDING DOES NOT NECESSARILY IN OUR JUDGEMENT HAVE TO RELATE TO PACKAGES IF AFTER JORDANIANS OBTAIN SAUDI COMMITMENT THEY WISH TO BEGIN FUDING ALL LONG LEADTIME ITMES FROM WHATEVER PHASE WITHIN THE \$500M AND RELY ON SECOND PHASE TO COVER ON GOING COSTS IN LATER PERIOD IE 1978-1979. IN FACT IN A CONVERSATION WITH RIFAI LAST NIGHT HE TOLD ME THAT ALL WE REALLY NEED IS A REASONABLE SAUDI COMMITMENT ALONG THE LINES DISCUSSED WITH HASSAN AND THE BASIC DOWNPAYMENT. HE IMPLIES THEN SOME CONFIDENCE THAT OUTYEAR FUNDING CAN BE OBTAINED. BUT THIS VIEW IS NOT YET FULLY SHARED BY KING, AND HE HAS BUILT IT UP WITH ME ENOUGH TIMES TO KNOW THAT IT COULD BECOME A STICKING POINT IF WE CANNOT SAY SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE THAN REFTEL (A) SECRETARY'S MESSAGE OF APRIL 18 OF COURSE INDICATED THAT SECOND STAGE WOULD LOOK AT WAYS OF DUDING LOWER PRIORITY EQUIPMENT. AMMAN 1449 REQUEST AND STATE 066403 APPROVED MY INDICATING THAT WE DID NOT DISCARD THE POSSIBILITY OF US CREDIT AND PRESS STORIES HAVE INDICATED IN MUCH MORE DETAIL THAT SUCH A STEP IS UNDER CONSIDERATION, SUBJECT TO REACTION OF CONGRESS. I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT IF SADIS ARE PREPARED TO FUND FULLY THE FIRST STATE AND WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS ON THAT POINT WE ARE PREPARED TO DO ALL WE CAN TO PROVIDE FOR A CONTINUING PROGRAM TO INSURE AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM FOR JORDAN (REFTEL B) ALONG THE LINES WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED TOGETHER. IN PARTICUARL WE ARE READY TO WORK FROM THE CONGRESS IN 1978 AND FOLLOWING YEARS MILITARY CREDIT TO COVER THE ACTUAL COSTS OF THE PAMENT DUE IN THOSE YEARS (AND NOT COVEREC BY SAUDI PHASE I FUNDS) ON GOING ITEMS OF THE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM FOR JORDAN. THESE APPROACHES TO CONGRESS WOULD BE IN ADDITION TO OUR REGULAR ON GOING PROGRAMS AT CURRENT LEVELS. GIVEN THE GENERALLY FAVORABLE RESPONSE WHICH CREDITS FOR JORDAN HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY CONGRESS WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THESE APPROACHES WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. FYI WE ESTIMATE ASIDE FROM \$120M COST INFLACTION FACTOR ITEMS AND SITE CONSTRUCTION AND ADMIN COSTS NOT PICKED UP BY GOJ WILL BE \$70M-\$105M SPREAD OVER SEVERAL YEARS)

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4.I DO NOT PLAN TO MAKE MY APPROACH TO KING UNTIL APRIL 30.

5.IN VIEW OF THE DIFFERNECES BETWEEN REFTEL B AND REFTEL C OVER WHETHER JORDANIANS HAVE CONVEYED TO SAUDIS THEIR INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO KEEP OPEN THE US AIR DEFENSE PROGRAM FUNDED BY SAUDIS, I WILL RECONFIRM THAT POINT WITH CROWN PRINCE, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY SAUDI PERCEPTION WILL BE CONTROLLING. AS OF THIS POINT FROM EVERYTHING

I HEARD LAST NIGHT (DESCRIBED IN DETAIL) HASSAN TOLD KHALID AND FAHD DEAL WAS STILL OPEN AND SAUDIS MADE SURE JORDANIANS UNDERSTOOD THEY WERE WILLING TO DO GREAT DEAL TO HELP JORDAN. I DO NOT EXPECT FURTHER CLARIFICATION OR REAFFIRMATION FROM HASSAN TO CHANGE THAT POINT.

6. MY STAFF AND I HAVE POINT ABOUT REGIONAL AIR DEFENSE SOME FURTHER THOUGHT. REFTEL C) WHILE DEPARTMENT IS IN BETTER POSITION TO JUDGE WE HOPE CONCEPT IF USED CAN BE HANDLED IN A WAY TO MINIMIZE ANY POSSIBLE ADVERSE ISRAELI (AND CONGRESSIONAL) REACTION. WE NOT THAT ISRAELIS HAVE PRETTY CONSISTENTLY ATTACKED SAUDIS AS STOREHOUSE AND PURVEYOR OF ARMS TO CONGRATION ARABS. WE WOULD NOT BELIEVE THAT COMMON USAGE OF SOME FACILITIES BY JORDANIANS AND SAUDIS WOULD BE A REAL ISSUE. SALIENT QUESTION MAY WELL BE NOT THE MECHANIC AND TECHNIQUES BUT WHETHER SAUDIS NEED AND WILL FIND POINT ABOUT REGIONAL AIR DEFENSE A COMFORTABLE FACESAVER FOR SOME INCREASE IN FUNDING.

7. FINALLY AT THE RISK OF OVERWHELMING YOUR INDULGENCE I WOULD LIKE A LITTLE RELIEF FROM STRICT INJUNCTION IN PARA 2 THAT IMPLIES I SHOULD SEE HUSSEIN FIRST. MAYBE THAT IS NOT WHAT YOU MEANT. RIFAI FROM OUR TALKS LAST NIGHT SEEMS TO BE COMING AROUND A LITTLE MORE ON THIS THAN THE KING AS HE DID OVER THE CONGRESSIONAL CRUNCH LAST SEPTEMBER. HE IS STILL AS WE OFTEN LAMENT A POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON THE KING. (HE TRIED LAST WEEK I AM SURE TO RESIGN AND FAILED THIS WILL HELP IN HIS INFLUENCE) THIS I NEED SOME LATITUDE TO PREPARE THE WAY A BIT WITH HIM ON SUCH THINGS AS THE CONTRACT PROLONGATION IDEA AN APPROACH HE SEEMED TO THINK WELL OF. ALSO I CANNOT OF COURSE EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT KING WILL HAVE RIFAI AT THE MEETING OR ASK ME TO SEE RIFAI FIRST WHEN I ASK TO SEE HIM. PICKERING

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